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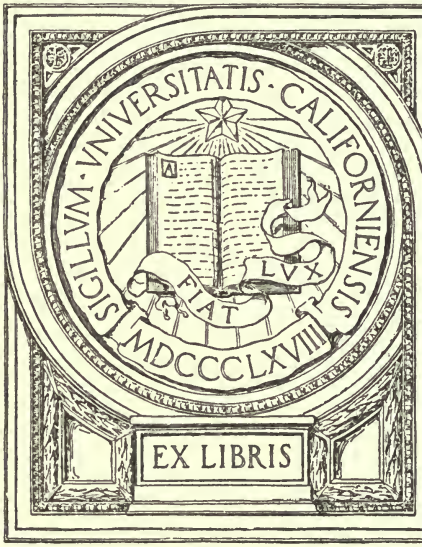

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CHINESE LETTER-WRITING

FOR MISSIONARIES

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CHINESE LETTER-WRITING

Univ
California

FOR MISSIONARIES

— BY —

W. ARTHUR CORNABY

SHANGHAI:
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1914

PREFACE.

The contents of this booklet were prepared to serve as notes for a course of lessons given at the Kuling Language School, but have been considered of use to the missionary community in general.

From the Chinese point of view, a missionary's task is to get men to "learn the Doctrine," by his first having learnt the language in which that "Doctrine" is to be expressed. It behoves him, therefore, to learn that language in such a manner as to gain respect for his message, whether it be delivered in a spoken or written form.

For the latter, he may be inclined to trust entirely to his Chinese pundit, but both he and his message will command the greater respect if he be able, with his own pen, to write with some degree of fluency. Towards this end, he may gain practice through the medium of amateur letters to a few of his intimate Chinese friends ; for his faculties of composition for print in his own language have been gained, in the first instance, through practice in letter-writing to his own folks at home.

There are various technicalities in Chinese letter-writing which may have debarred him from attempt-

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ing it. But it is the aim of this booklet to explain these in such wise that he may be encouraged to master them.

Then, there may be occasions in which, for its own sake, he would desire to be able to write a short letter in Chinese. He may wish to consult a Chinese colleague at a distance on subjects concerning which it may not be well, at the time, that a third person should be a link to some thirty or forty more. Or he may find himself stranded up-country, with no pundit near at hand, under conditions which require the sending off of some written message. Or, he may wish personally to thank some Chinese gentleman, in his own handwriting, for a kindness received.

For many reasons a China missionary's equipment will be the more complete if he include in it the faculty of Chinese letter-writing.

Wusueh, Hupeh, 1914.

CHINESE LETTER-WRITING.

I. CHINESE LETTERS IN GENERAL.

A Chinese letter from an able Chinese scholar, to unsophisticated Western eyes, is little short of a phenomenon.

It comes to us, by post or by hand, in a large envelope of soft white paper, with a broad crimson stripe down the middle. The right-hand white space contains either our address, wrapped up in polite formulae, or (if sent by hand) some formula of presentation to us ; the left-hand white space, the sender's address, or (if sent by hand) his name and a word of obeisance. On the red stripe itself there is writ large the surname which Chinese intercourse has obliged us to adopt as our own, followed by the words for "Pastor" or "Signor," then perhaps "His Excellency" (though this was supposed to have been abolished at the Revolution of 1911), and a request in two characters that we will either "personally," "peacefully," or "graciously" open it.

We essay to do so, perhaps with our fingers,—which, in the absence of any flap, reduces the whole to a shapeless mass ; or perchance in Chinese fashion (unless we are ladies, to whom the process would be unthinkable !) by running its edge along the tip of our tongue.

Then, should the contents be of a complimentary order, what are we of the West to make of them ? How are we to sum up all the ornate phrases in which our literary friend has expressed himself ? For he seems to be posing as our abject worshipper, abasing

himself in the dust, and glorifying us into beings aloof from all common humanity.

Taking the whole at its face value, we may be exalted beyond measure ; though, as a fact, our probable inability to make head or tail of the missive may be a seasonable antidote against any serious falling from grace. But, reading the letter through, say, with the aid of a teacher, yet in an unimaginative spirit, what hopes we had cherished as to our friend's sincerity are like to receive a rude shaking. In what light, then, are we to regard this wondrous concoction?

The answer is—As a work of fine art. The writer may possibly have been in his sincerest mood when he poised his brush-pen to indite his letter. He is not consciously exaggerating, in any vulgar sense of the word. In accord with Far Eastern custom, from time immemorial, the occasion demands the full play of what art-faculties he possesses,—art in the use of his venerable hieroglyphs, and in the use of choice crystalline phrases which are as firmly embedded in the language of China, as the monosyllabic signs themselves. Mentally, he revels in the Highland scenery of the Chinese landscape painter, where the peaks are pinnacles, and the valleys ravines. He is an artist, and in this light is his composition to be adjudged and appreciated.

We have been accustomed to say, somewhat to China's disparagement, that many a modern invention of the West, which was once anticipated of old in the Far East, has remained in the embryonic condition, from arrested development ; whereas we have developed these things, for the greatening of our social and national life. But, over against all this, we must

admit that, in at least one social invention—that of letter-writing—there has been progressive development, until a Chinese epistle, at its best, has become a piece of literary music, in the full gamut of graceful sentiment ; a distilled elixir, redolent of all the most subtle perfumes of cultured courtesy.

The general education of the West has been along the various lines of the arts and sciences, of world history and applied geography, of matters religious and problems of thought, as well as of classical study and literary grammaticalness. But the education of the Far East, since the days of the classics, has been mostly confined to the two leading subjects of literary style, and courtly correctness of conduct. And these two subjects, being wedded in perpetual union, have produced as their offspring that literary embodiment of all things courtly and courteous—a Chinese scholar's epistolary letter.

Then consider that letter-writing has been (apart from an occasional essay or poem) the chief form of exercise for whatever talent the Chinese scholar has acquired. He has seldom become an author, and never a dramatist, hardly ever a pamphleteer. Speaking broadly, the literary faculties of two thousand years, in a land of literary scholarship, have been focussed upon the one art of letter-writing. It has been here (apart from the civil examinations) that the unofficial scholar has sought to establish his reputation ; it has been here, if anywhere, that he has found his opportunity for shining. Thus his art has been perfected, in virtuosity of language, and unerring rhythm of phrase, so as to carry sheer beauty of expressiveness to the farthest conceivable point.

I have stated and dwelt on these facts for the reason that the first step toward the personal study of any art whatever should be the gaining of a sympathetic and appreciative attitude towards any worthy specimen of that art ; even if, at the outset, the feeling produced is one of despair at our ever being able, in any remote degree, to emulate it.

For the student's further discouragement (to dispose of this side of the case, before coming to the more hopeful side), it may be related that, in the office of a certain periodical, when letters were frequently written to high officials of the old regime, or received from them,—of three cultured Chinese secretaries, only one was selected for the onerous task of writing to, or replying to, these highest scholars of the realm; and that, when he had composed his epistles, they were handed to a man in another department, employed for his fine handwriting, to make out the final copy. Thus the letters sent forth represented the combined genius of a specialist at letter-composing, and a specialist at character-writing. The moral of this paragraph is, therefore, that we from the West may cheerfully erase from our programme the writing of letters to literary notables or local officials, and may leave all that to the best Chinese scholar, who is locally available, to achieve on our behalf.

Another large class of Chinese letters, involving many intricacies of expression, is that of letters to relatives, in all their varying shades of relatedness. Whole volumes of models for these are on sale in Chinese book-shops, for the instruction of young Chinese students. But these, too, may all be eliminated from our programme of study, for the obvious reason

that we, being foreigners by birth, have no Chinese relatives to write to.

With these two problems removed from our path, then, how far may we gather hope in the matter of future progress toward true Chinese letter-writing ?

The answer will, of course, vary with our linguistic abilities in general, and our opportunities of practice in reading and writing Chinese.* But given average abilities, and a fair amount of practice, we may, with a little specialized training, such as the present booklet seeks to mark out,—we may very well hope by and bye to produce letters to our Chinese colleagues and friends, that shall be comparable (shall we say ?) to the dragons carried along in Chinese spring-tide processions, with an ornate head and tail, and a plain body between. And if that "body" be indeed plainness itself, in another sense of the word—if it plainly expresses our thought and our message—the orthodox heading and tailing will make it pass current among our Chinese intimates.

A Chinese letter-writer is really an artist in mosaic, as regards the beginning and end of his missive. For, as we shall see further on, these beginnings and endings of letters are made up of selections from a definite stock of ready-made terms—a fair number of which are collected at the end of the book.

Let us, then, pluck heart for our task ; first studying the make-up of a Chinese letter such as we

* *The Divided Realme* (東周列國志) is a useful work for practice in reading alone by oneself. And for writing the characters, Mr. Baller's *A B C of Chinese Writing* is a most admirable aid.

are likely to receive ; then examine a few simpler specimens, and consider the ways and means by which we may write a modestly passable letter ourselves.

II. COMPONENT PARTS.

A full-fledged Chinese epistle consists of nine items: (1) the name of the receiver, (2) adjunctive title, (3) dedicatory phrase, (4) introductory words, (5) opening phrase, (6) the communication itself, (7) closing wishes, (8) date, and (9) signature in a polite setting.

Glancing over this analysis, or over an actual letter, we are apt to exclaim: "What is the use of all this elaboration at the beginning?" The question may be answered, to the minds of any possessed of the art-sense, by asking another question, to wit: "What is the use of the illuminated initial on manuscripts produced in the mediæval monasteries?" In itself unnecessary, it yet adds dignity and beauty to the whole. It indicates that the scribe has not undertaken his task flippantly, or as a hireling, but with some measure of thought and reverence. It marks one of the great sentiments of humanity, widely diffused through all ages and climes,—that a worthy undertaking should have a noble commencement.

We find that instinct expressed in the first four verses of St. Luke's Gospel, where the language is elaborately classical, although the verses following are in easy colloquial. We find it socially among the Chinese in the ceremonial opening of every New Year, and in the ceremonial start of wedded life even among cottagers, whose whole outlook for the year,

or for married life, may be bald and meagre. And it is not too much to say that a letter, regarded philosophically, suggests the marriage of thought or feeling of the sender and the receiver, even as Tennyson has it in some lines of a sonnet, first published in the Preface to the *Memoirs*, by his son:

> There lies the letter, but it is not he
> As he retires into himself and is;
> Sender and sent-to go to make up this,
> The offspring of their union.

The five introductory items are nearly all found in the simplest letter written by a school-boy or girl, although the third, fourth, and fifth items are not absolute essentials in letter-writing. In letters to relatives, a term of relationship takes the place of the receiver's name. No Chinese brother or sister, when writing each to the other, begins with the Chinese equivalent of "Dear Tom" or "Dear Mary," any more than they (or our own sons and daughters, for the matter of that) would quote their father's or mother's personal name, inside the envelope, at the start of a letter.

(1) *Receiver's name.* By a person's name in China, we may mean his surname and "official name" (his 姓 and his 名), or we may mean his "intimate name" (his 號) by itself. If not very intimate with the person to whom we are witing, or if we do not happen to know his 號, we may put his 姓 and his 名 at the beginning of our letter. If very intimate with him, we should write his 號, and no surname, there. It is this second or "intimate name" which most answers to our Christian names in correspondence.

Were we writing to Mr. John Smith as "Dear John," we should not add the surname "Smith."

The surname alone, if followed by 先生,* or 牧師, or 醫士; or 師母, 師娘 or 小姐, as the case may be, is admissible for the first item.

The name of the recipient is properly exalted two spaces above the top of our character-columns; as are also two of the four characters in the closing wishes. And throughout the letter, all references to the recipient which, in English, would involve the words *you* or *your*, are indicated, either by suddenly beginning a new column (so as to place the verb or adjective belonging to him at the top), or by leaving a blank (as a pause of reverence) before the verb or adjective. Thus, the simple rule is that, whenever we feel inclined to write "you" or "your," we should "go up top" or leave a blank instead.

(2) *Adjunctive title.* The term 先生 may need no further adjunctive title; but taking it as part of the name, that name as a whole may be followed by one of a number of adjunctive titles (as in some of the specimen letters), of which 仁兄, answering to "My good Sir," is the commonest. Before the Revolution, 大人 "Great Sir" or "Your Excellency" (on envelopes "His Excellency"), a phrase belonging to high officials, was commonly used, and is not quite discard-

*先生 is of course literally the Italian *Signor* (or else *Signora*), or our English *Sir* contracted from *Senior*, but used as in Italy. The parallel is the more close since 先生 was originally a title applied by a monarch to his Counseller, even as *Signor* is derived from the once exclusive appellation for the Italian nobility. The one stood for an aristocracy of wisdom, as the other did of birth.

ed now. In school-boys' letters to parents or pastors it is still considered an essential of respect. In other letters it may follow 仁兄. But no missionary would be blamed for omitting it.

(3) *Dedicatory phrase.* Here again we have a great variety for selection, from 尊鑒 and the like (asking the recipient to give our letter his "honourable inspection"), to 如見 or 如面 or 如晤, as though we were starting a face-to-face conversation.

(4) *Introductory words.* These may be references to the period of time since we and the receiver of our letter last met, or last heard one from the other (see a variety of phrases at the end of the book); or they may embody our pastoral feelings (see No. VIII of the specimen letters). Or, in more ornate letters, these may consist of floral couplets appropriate to the season of writing; or perchance couplets extolling the recipient's benevolent character, or scholarly attainments. But, as mere amateurs from the West, we may be allowed to be so smitten with these parallel excellences in our Chinese friends as to find (with some literalness) that "language fails us." In a word, we may omit all such compliments, and no one will be any the worse.

In letters to officials, however, a few of such compliments, skilfully compounded, are considered essential, and are commonly supposed to assist the official mind toward a favourable reception of any appeal which the letter contains. But these we may leave to an experienced scholar to compose in his letter for us.

(5) *Opening phrase.* This announces the start of the matter on which the sender is writing. Its simplest form is 啓者. "To inform you" (lit. "To open up the subject"). Its commonest form is 敬啓者, "Respectfully to inform you" (though 茲啓者 may be used in informal notes). It is always in order to add such a word as 敬 to an equal, although we do not in English letters write "Yours respectfully" in such a case. Indeed, an English professor of science told me one day that, having some two hundred applications for the post of assistant, he weeded-out at least a hundred by casting aside all that were "respectfully" written. He was truly of republican sentiment, as regards the brotherhood of chemical research. But such a sentiment may take long to permeate Chinese correspondence. It has, however, cropped up in one curious phrase, at the extreme end of letters—to anticipate a little. Instead of the old words after the signature 拜 or 頓, indicative of a low obeisance, a colloquial phrase 脫帽 "who takes off his hat (to you)" is fairly the rage at present—as though letters forsooth were written or read in the public street!

In reply letters, the opening phrase 敬啓者 as a rule is not given, as it properly indicates the start of a correspondence; 敬復者 "respectfully to reply to yours" may be put in its place.

(6) *The actual letter itself.* The *Spectator* some years ago said: "The qualities which go to the making of an ideal letter are lightness of touch, ease of expression, brilliance which is never forced, and amiability which is never exaggerated or forgotten."

A golden rule, indeed. And all that we have to do is to follow it in our Chinese, especially the "ease of expression"! That may suggest to us Paganini's golden rule for learning the violin: "First of all genius, then twenty years at twelve hours a day." How simple! As simple, indeed, as Confucius' rules for the making of his "high minded man" (the best rendering of 君子)!

To come to practical politics. The body of a Chinese letter is properly written in easy and facile *wên-li*, in which you may have noticed that, just as in Hebrew the normal base of each word consists of three consonants, so the normal Chinese sentence or clause consists of four characters—with various connecting links, here and there. The directions for writing in fluent *wên-li* will thus be based on that word of command: "Form fours, march!"—with of course a broken step here and there.

The rule is a useful and eminently practical one. Even if our vocabulary consists largely of *Mandarin*, —by endeavouring to "form fours" every now and again, we may gain both compactness and smoothness. Then, a careful glance over any Chinese-English dictionary, or our listening to any eloquent Chinese preacher, will reveal to us the fact that there are in the language many thousands of ready-made four-character phrases, which we may collect for ourselves (say, in a MS book under broad Subject-headings) to eke out our own vocabulary.

Here are a few phrases, familiar to every missionary: 宣講福音; 勸人爲善; 感化人心; 悔罪改過; 祈禱上帝; 依賴救主; 贖罪之恩; which can be wrought into a connected uttterance, such as

我等來中華，宣講福音，不但欲勸人爲善，乃欲感化人心，使之由中心悔罪改過，無日不祈禱上帝，而依賴我救主贖罪之恩.

In trying to decipher a difficult Chinese letter (which comes to us unpunctuated), a sharp look-out for the "fours" will help us considerably. And our earlier attempts at composition in letter *wên-li* may not ignobly consist of a tactful threading together of four-character elements, until we not only learn the use of these phrases already coined (the learning of which forms a large part of all Chinese scholarship), but also the art of compounding our own four-character phrases, upon these existing models. Beautiful indeed are many of them! For, as in Chemistry, no alkaloid extracted from the world of organic nature is considered pure enough for use until it has been crystallized-out, so in Chinese the four-character phrase is often a luminous crystal of thought in expression,—as every collector of such phrases will soon discover for himself.

A certain young Chinese friend of mine, a student at college, has adopted the plan of writing me letters in English, for his own practice, and for my correction. And should the aspirant to Chinese letter-writing be possessed of an intimate Chinese friend, the practice of writing to him in Chinese will prove most remunerative. For (as one has remarked in the Preface) the art of composition for letters will stand us in good stead for the future writing of papers for magazines, or of booklets for the colporteur.

The pen we write with should be our own pen-nib, not the Chinese brush-pen. We can never produce passably third-rate work with the latter, not having

had our hand trained to use it, as Chinese writers have, from earliest childhood.

We may avoid much untidiness by using a ruled sheet of paper—best ruled in oblong spaces, say half-an-inch wide by three-eights—placed under the thinner white paper on which we write. Some of our characters may be of crude architecture, but at least the whole letter may be neat in its lining and spacing.

(7) *Closing wishes.* These are usually packed into four characters, two of which (such as **即 問** or **敬 請**) continue our last column, and the other two (such as **福 安** or **道 安**) must be written two spaces above the normal top of the letter, if the receiver's name has been thus written; or else level with the top of the letter, if his name-characters have not been thus exalted. These four-character wishes are preceded by such a phrase as **專 此** "just this much;" the whole forming a sentence like: "Just this much, Wishing you happiness and peace." Or, the whole six words in Chinese may be packed into four characters, as **此 問 福 安** "This (is to) wish (you) happiness (and) peace."

What a convenience these phrases will prove! They will save all the trouble of explaining that you "must now close, as it is dinner-time," or "as the dear baby is crying"—doubtless for his dinner; or "because it is so very late," or "because . . . (see your boy's or girl's next letter from boarding-school); or, as a French lady once put it with candour: "I took up my pen having nothing to do, and now lay it down having nothing to say."

And one cannot help thinking how many a yawn might be saved, and how much more good done, if

some sermons—in *Chinese* of course I mean—could only end, when the preacher has done, with some such crisp formula as that which winds-up all Chinese letters!

(8) *The date of writing.* It is rather an omission in Chinese letters that they do not contain the address of the sender. But this, when needed, is found on the envelope outside. Also, in many Chinese letters the date is omitted, but it is always well to give just the month and the day of the month—in smaller characters, above the signature. If 日 is written for the day of the month, it indicates that the lunar month is meant. If 號 (or 号) is written, it shows that the solar month is intended. With this distinction in mind, we need not always trouble to add 陰歷 or 陽歷, though for the date of a meeting, or an intended visit, it is best to do so.

If the letter is written at night, the date may be followed by the characters 燈下 for "under the evening lamp."

(9) *The signature.* This, like the receiver's name, will either consist of our 姓 and our 名, or of our 號 by itself—if we are well known to the receiver, or if our card, bearing our 姓 and our 名 be enclosed. It may be preceded by 弟 (or 妹), if that word has been used in the letter for "I." And it should be followed by such a term as 手草 or 手字 or 泐, meaning that it is in our own handwriting; or the expression may be one of respect, such as 上言, or if we are of the masculine gender, the 免冠 (rather than the vulgar 脫帽) which has taken the place of 拜 or 頓, in the letters of Younger China.

III. A FEW SPECIMEN LETTERS, Punctuated for Study, With Notes Added.

I. Letter from a girl of fourteen, written from boarding school, to a pastor who had taken photos of some members of her family, and had sent her a print.

○牧師大人如面、敬啓者、前天收到
牧師所送的像、晚生今無別事、特
來數字多謝、晚生所盼者、望
上帝與　牧師同在、今在學中已有百
餘學生、不多言、特此、敬請
平安　○月○○日　晚生○○○拜

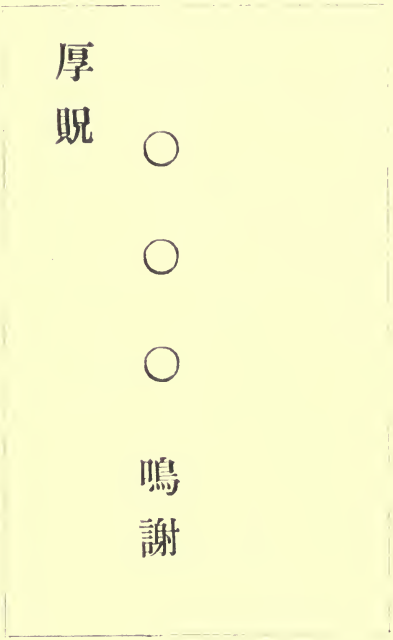
Notes on Letter I.

This is a perfect little letter of its kind. It contains all the essential elements (for *introductory words* are not essentials).

The *dedicatory phrase* is appropriately **如面** "as though before your face." Note the four-character phrases: **今無別事**; **特來數字**; **敬請平安**.

The first two characters of the letter, when elevated two spaces above the top, are usually those of a two-character name, rather than two characters out of a three-character name. To this juvenile writer, however, the receiver's name was just ○ 牧師, and she would not use his 號, or write ○ 君, as a senior man-friend might have done. Addressing a pastor by his surname, or a teacher by his or her surname, she might have been content to elevate just that one character above the top of the letter, as in Letter III; but, being in the habit of writing to her parents with two characters elevated, this would hardly occur to her.

II. Letter of thanks for a present received. And a formula for acknowledging a present by visiting-card.



Notes on Letter II.

The first two blanks indicate the receiver's 號. One *adjunctive title* would have sufficed, but three are given as an extreme of polite feeling. 足下 *beneath* (*whose*) *feet*, means "before whose presence" but is often used as a polite form of "You, Sir."

昨蒙惠賜 might be used by itself, but **佳品** is added for "beautiful gift" (lit. *admirable sort or variety*). **嘉品** is a variant of this.

拜領之餘 for "Very many thanks." Optional phrase **拜領謝謝** or **曷勝感戴** "How can I adequately express my gratitude"—but here the next phrase contains the word "gratitude."

慙感交併 "(with) mingled shame and gratitude." Compare the common phrase **悲喜交加** for mingled emotions of joy and sorrow.

專肅鳴謝 "Specially and respectfully to utter my thanks."

敬請台安 "Respectfully to wish (your) eminent peace."

The Visiting Card.

鳴謝厚賜 "Uttering thanks (for your) generous bestowal."

Optional phrase: **敬謝明賜**. Or, if the gift has come from some one who is not a scholar, just the two words **感謝** beneath the name will suffice.

Phrases for kindness received, not necessarily in the form of gifts:

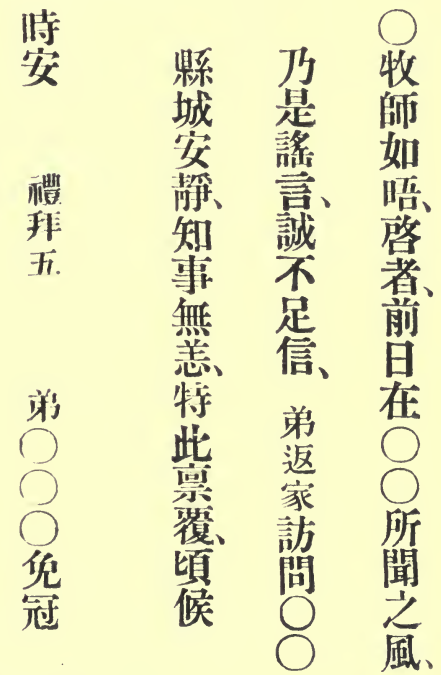
感荷隆情 "Exceedingly obliged (for your) abundant good-feeling."

感佩深恩 "Gratefully acknowledging (your) great kindness."

深沾惠澤 "Deeply conscious of (your) kindness"—as of a needed shower upon herbage.

In reply to thanks, one may write **何勞致謝** "What occasion was there for you to trouble to thank me?"

III. Letter to a pastor from a school master whose country home was near to a city alleged to have been ravaged by brigands, and its magistrate killed. He returned home to enquire, and found the rumour to have been groundless.



Notes on Letter III.

Here the surname is elevated but one space above the top, and so only one of the last two characters in the *closing wish* is thus elevated.

如晤 "as though we met."

誠不足信 "truly unworthy of credence," a ready-coined phrase. Five other four-character clauses, composed by the writer, will be noted.

知事無恙 "the magistrate was unhurt." In another context **無恙** might have meant "without disease," or, as we say "quite well." **別來無恙** is a common phrase in letters, written before the *opening phrase*, and meaning "I hope you have been quite well ever since we met."

特此稟覆 (a variant of **復**) "Specially this, to report (my) reply."

頃候 a variant of **即候**; **時安** "(your) continual peace," lit. *hourly* peace.

IV. A letter of congratulation at New Year's time.

○老先生大人尊前鈞鑒、敬啓者、奉書恭賀
新禧、願
大人福壽康甯、
閤潭清吉爲頌、並請
近祉、
師母道安

學生○○○謹上

Notes on Letter IV.

Here no characters are elevated above the top of the letter, but it is an exceedingly respectful one nevertheless. There are two *dedicatory phrases*, 尊前 "(Before your) honourable presence," and 鈞鑒 "(for your) noble consideration."

本書 "I have the honour to write." 書 is what the pen 筆 says 曰, and thus is used variously for the verb "to write" as well as for the nouns "epistle" and "book."

恭賀新禧 "Respectful congratulations (on) New (Year's) joys"—the usual phrase for the New Year. It may be used upon visiting cards.

福壽康甯 "A happy and long life of health and peace."

闔潭淸吉 a variant of 闔潭均吉 "Prosperity to the whole family," a polite term for the family of an official.

爲頌 lit. *to extol,* or *commend,* but meaning "I hope."

並請近祉 "Also wishing (you all) present blessing."

V. Letter from a man who has received a catalogue of books, and who writes to the business manager for two copies of a certain work.

○君大人閣下、敬啓者、奉接所　發來書
單、並列書價、領悉一切、祈照價將○
○○○二部、付到敝處爲荷、此請
福安　○月○○號　弟○○○書

Notes on Letter V.

奉接 "I have the honour to receive," answering to "I am in receipt of your favour . . . " in English business letters.

領悉一切 a polite phrase for "Contents duly noted."

爲荷 "and oblige."

書 is used in the letter for *book*, and after the signature for "write (s this)."

As the writer asks that the books be sent to his address, we might surely have expected that he would have given it in the letter! But as it was on the envelope, he deemed that sufficient.

VI. Return letter to an editor (from one of the princes, in the summer of 1908) enclosing a photograph, to appear in a magazine, as requested.

逕復者、頃接
來函、悉聆壹是、戔戔無補、方抱歉私、過辱
齒芬、適增顏汗、隨呈小照一紙、用副
雅意、屢讀
貴報、啓我良多、
作者宏才、欣佩奚似、專此、順頌
著安

○○手啓

Notes on Letter VI.

This is a letter which, in its unpunctuated form, might present some difficuties to the student. But, after the opening phrase, it will be seen to consist almost entirely of "fours."

逕啓者 or 逕復者, is a term used for equals.

頃接來函 "(I have) just received (your) letter," a very frequent phrase.

悉聆壹是 a variant of the phrase in a previous letter, for "contents duly noted."

戔戔無補 "Cramped beyond repair (are my abilities)," 方抱歉私 "a burden of dissatisfaction to myself," 過辱蕙芬 "and a shocking disgrace to (the) fragrant sentiments (expressed in your letter)" 適增顏汗 "so that one's face perspires the more"—a touch of wit in mid-summer. "Anyhow, I beg-to-offer a small likeness (of mine), to be used to further (副 lit. *to second*) your refined wishes. Often have I read your magazine, to my manifold instruction. It is conducted with wonderful genius. How can I express my gladsome acknowledgments (of its worth)?" —奚似 having the force of 何如.

順頌著安 "Compliantly extolling (your) manifest peace," is a literal but not a lucid English translation of the *closing wishes*. "Extolling" is a polite word for "wishing," and "peace" is used in the general sense of "well-being." 著 "manifest" is used here for the reason that, in Chinese, authors are called "manifestors" or "publishers" of their thoughts; this word 著 often following the author's name at the head of an article, or the beginning of a book. And 著作家 is a general term for either "authors and poets," or (recently) for writers of articles and books, though it is literally "publishers and doers." The sense here is therefore: "Well-being in your literary work."

手啓 "indited by (my own) hand."

VII. Letter from a Chinese merchant (who had studied English) to a Western friend whose handwriting in English he had been unable fully to read.

○○仁兄大人足下、昨日欣承
惠示、內有數句、繕寫間、
大筆淋漓、其草法令弟淺學人、不能
讀識、謹請
指教、並懇繕正清楚、再寫爲荷、使弟
捧誦明白、是爲至禱、草此、敬請
升安　○月○號　弟○○頓

Notes on Letter VII.

The writer of this missive has a manifest claim upon our tenderest sympathies! How often have we received Chinese letters, written here and there in such a beautiful running-hand, that no efforts of ours

could decipher them—and sometimes (be it confessed) English letters also!

欣承惠示 "Delighted to receive (your) kind letter" (lit. *commands*).

內有數句 "within which were some words" **繕寫間** "in the writing (of)."

大筆淋漓 "(your) free-flowing pen" (lit. *great pen pouring forth like continuous rain*), **其草法** "the running-style of which" **令...不能讀識** "your humble servant, in the shallowness of his scholarship, could not read with understanding" (lit. *caused . . . not to be able to,* is the common Chinese idiom).

謹請指教 "(I would) respectfully crave instruction,"—a frequently used phrase. **並懇...清楚** 'And beg (you) to re-copy and write it again quite distinctly," **爲荷** "and oblige," **使弟** "so that I may," **捧誦明白** "grasp and read (it all) clearly." The word **誦** for "read" means "to hum over," as in the Three Character Classic, and the Hebrew of the word translated "meditate" in Ps. i. 2b.

是爲至禱 "This is my earnest request."

草此 "(Just) these rough characters."

敬請升安 "Respectfully wishing (you) ascendant peace."

VIII. Letter from a missionary to a middle-aged preacher, with pastoral greetings, announcing a Preachers' Meeting.

○先生仁兄、自晤至今、屈計數旬、甚爲思念、遙祝闔堂、皆蒙　聖靈相感之力、至於教會日臻興盛、教友潛心修德、茲啟者、弟於本月○○號○鐘時、開會、討論傳道善策、請　先生將一切捐項之賬、前來算繳、決不悞期、專此、順候

闔堂教友均安

陽歷○月○號○○○手草

Notes on Letter VIII.

Here is a letter containing a few clauses of *introductory words*, before the business part of the message commences.

仁兄 may be used to any person of our own age, or even a few years younger than we. It is a term of respect, rather than of literal seniority—"In honour preferring one another."

屈計 is a condensed form of 屈指計 "to bend the fingers and reckon,"—a reference to the primitive days of counting on the fingers. 數旬 is "several tens of days" (or "several decades," as the context may indicate).

遙祝闔堂 "From a distance (I pray for) blessing upon the whole 'hall'"—or company of the faithful.

日臻興盛, a refined phrase for "daily increasing prosperity."

潛心修德, ready-coined phrase for "cultivating virtue in the hidden heart." Compare Ps. li. 6b, "in the hidden part."

茲啓者, a very informal *opening phrase.*

討論善策 "To beg a discussion of good methods," *i.e.* "to invite opinions and worthy plans."

决不悞期 "By no means mistake the date," where we should say: "Please be sure and remember" it.

算繳, "reckon up and hand in," or "pay in."

均安, used when several persons are included in the *closing wishes.*

IX. Notice of a Committee Meeting sent by a Secretary—perhaps on a post-card.

敬啟者、○○會之委辦會、定於○月○號
○點鐘、聚集於○○○○堂、到時懇請
光臨爲盼、
道安
書記 晚○○○上言

Notes on Letter IX.

會 is assuredly one of the most over-worked characters in the Chinese language. It may mean "to pay a call," "to meet someone," "to assemble together," "an assembly or meeting," "a procession," "a society, league, guild, or co-operative arrangement"

or even "opportunity"; and in missionary matters it has to serve for "Church," "an association" of that Church, and (when prefixed by either 董事 or 幹事 or 委辦) "a committee" of that association. Think then, what a triumph of modern nomenclature, in the use of heiroglyphs presumably as old as the pyramids, it would be to be able to call "a *meeting* of the sub-*committee* of the A. B. *Guild* appointed by the General *Committee* of the Missionary *Society* of the Y. Z. *Church*, to discuss the present *opportunity* (機會) for discouraging idol *processions*"!

懇請光臨 "Begging the favour of your presence" (*luminous descent*, as from some higher region).

爲盼 "as is (much) to be hoped." 爲荷 is used of hoped-for gifts or objective favours; 爲盼 is more general, for anything desired. 道安 with no previous characters, amounts to the ejaculation: "Every blessing!"

X. Letter from a senior missionary to a junior preacher, concerning a very unsatisfactory member of the Church in his place.

○仁弟如晤、啟者、因○○○素行無忌、屢犯教規、雖授勸化、置若罔聞、至今仍不改悔、設若容留、實與闔會有礙、不得不函請先生、暫將伊之名除黜、以肅教規、雖然如此、我等務必爲之常禱、深願聖靈再施感化、使伊於日後、恍然醒悟、歸眞返樸、復收可也、專此即請

道安　　○月○日　　○○○泐

Notes on Letter X.

When the receiver of the letter is comparatively juvenile, 仁弟 may be used as the *adjunctive title*, rather than 賢弟, for the latter would make him almost an adopted brother, it being a term of intimacy for an actual younger brother.

素行無忌, a ready-coined phrase, habitually to act regardless of personal caution, or general dislike." 肆無忌憚 would be an almost synonymous phrase.

置若罔聞, another ready-coined phrase: "*set-it-aside* as though he had not heard it."

授 here is better than 受 "to receive," for the latter may suggest an inner and actual reception, just as 聽 may mean " to hearken unto " and " obey."

函請, to proffer a request by letter.

務必 is a good term for a forcible " must."

恍然醒悟, a ready-coined phrase: " arouse with a start of surprise."

歸眞返樸, another, meaning to " return to (his) former condition of genuineness."

復收可也, an idiomatic inversion, meaning "(One) can (then) receive (him) again."

IV. THE ENVELOPE.

If our Chinese correspondence is to be carried on "decently and in order" we should give a littte attention to the addressing of an envelope. With our ordinary pen and ink, it is inadvisable to use the Chinese red and white striped envelopes, as they are mostly of unsized paper, which will make our 大筆淋漓 in too literal a sense.

Before the Post Office became a settled institution in China (and indeed afterwards) the formula for addressing a letter was somewhat elaborate. It included such admonitions to the letter.carrier as 決勿送失 "By no means lose this!" or "make a mistake in its delivery." And almost always: 火速火速 "Be quick as fire, quick as fire!" just as our great-great-grandfathers wrote on their envelopes: "Speed, spur, and spare not!" In letters sent by boat or letter-hong, the fire-like speed was always to be rewarded by the wherewithal for buying "fire-water" (酒資照例); and still is, away from Post Office routes.

Down the right-hand side of the envelope of letters sent by hand is generally written: 內要信煩寄○○○○○○面交 "Enclosed is an important letter, which I will trouble you to take to . . . . . and personally deliver to (Mr. So-and-so)." Or if sent c/o someone else: 煩送至○○○轉交 "I will trouble you to take this to Mr. Such-and-such, that he may in turn deliver it to (Mr. So-and-so)." Or, if the bearer be a personal friend, going direct to the addressee, then (instead of our "Kind favour of Mr. Such-and-

such") the words: 內函敬煩面交 "This enclosure I would respectfully trouble you to deliver to (Mr. So-and-so)."

Nothing is lost by a little courtesy, even on the outside of an envelope.

If in a hurry, when sending a letter by a friend, the two characters 請交 "Please deliver to" will be sufficient. And for letters sent by a servant to an honourable friend: 即呈 "Just offer-up-to" is a good formula. 立候回音 is the phrase for "Bearer to await reply."

The Post Office has no need of politeness on envelopes. It prefers a clean-cut address—with the province-name added, unless the letter is to go to a city quite near at hand.*

On the left-hand side of envelopes sent by post, should be written the sender's postal address. This may be preceded by the word "from," and followed by the sender's surname (and name *ad. lib.*) and the word 緘 "missive," or 寄 "forwards (this)," or both; or in the case of complimentary letters, 呈 or 謹呈, if 呈 has not been already written at the side. Where the sender's address is well known to the receiver of the letter, it may be omitted; and the name also—in which case it is usual to write the three characters 名內具 "The name is presented inside."

Down the middle of the envelope, written larger than the words at the sides, is given the surname and

* When a letter is addressed, in Chinese or English, to a certain post-office, to "wait until called for," the phrase is 存局候領.

"official name" (姓名) of the addressee, with some title of respect following. The surname and may be the three top characters, and the 名 written below in smaller characters; or the 號 may be written thus, preceded by the word 甫. Then follows one of a number of terms, asking him to receive the letter.

From the simple 收, or 啟, the available formulae stretch out into a whole regiment of double-file terms, such as 察收, 查收 or 查納 "examine and receive," 收閱 "receive and read," 親啟 "personally open," 安啟 "open in peace," 玉啟 the polite form of 手啟, or the still higher term 升 (for 升啟) which suggests that our friend's fortunes are in the *ascendant*.

Addressing our correspondent politely thus, we may venture to hope (in the words of Swift) that

> No letter with an envelope
> Could give him more delight—

provided, of course, that the contents are of corresponding propriety.

It will be seen that the whole address is written in exactly the reverse order from ours. Where we should write "Mr. John Smith, 10 High Street, Maidstone, Kent," a corresponding address in Chinese would read: "Kent, Maidstone, High Street 10, Smith John Mr." There is a deep philosophy of history involved in the surname coming before the personal name in China. The so-called "savage" tribes of earth have preserved themselves intact through their practical emphasis on the *clan-basis* of mutual-aid and rough-hewn morality. From of old, the Chinese nation has preserved itself as such through

its emphasis on the *family-basis* of morality. And in the evolution of nations, it is only after that basis has been rendered secure by ingrained religious instincts, that the unitary individualism which regards a son or a daughter as an independent being, can be safely introduced into any land. It is early days yet, in this land of China, for personal names to precede the surname—except in such Christian families where there are higher safeguards than those of the enforced subjection of the old Chinese morality. Mr. A. B. Liu needs to be a good Christian, if he is to write, and think of, his personal name before that of his family; thus reversing the age-long conceptions of the Far Orient. And, perhaps happily for him, on Chinese envelopes, and within them, the old moralities are preserved—in suggestion, at least.

V. A SELECTION OF TERMS AND PHRASES.

"Heads and Tails."

Complimentary and General.

○○仁兄閣下惠鑒敬啟者……肅此敬頌台安　弟○○免冠
○○君鑒啟者……　專此順請近安　弟○○上言
○○先生尊鑒敬啟者……　草此即問道安　弟○○字泐
○先生仁兄如晤茲啟者……　特此即請時安　○○○手草
○先生仁弟如見茲啟者……　手此即問近安　○○○書

From a master or mistress to a servant.

○司務如面茲啓者……　此問日好　○○○手字

From a lady to (*a*) an elder or (*b*) younger lady-friend; (*c*) to an elderly or (*d*) middle-aged Bible-woman.

○○賢姊粧鑒敬啓者……　專此敬請粧安　妹○○上言
○○賢妹粧次如握啓者……　手此即問佳好　○○字泐
○○尊伯母敬啓者……　專此敬請道安　○○手草
○○尊叔母敬啓者……　特此即問道安　○○手字

Dedicatory Phrases; Closing Wishes; Introductory Words, etc.

Complimentary.

仁兄惠鑒　鈞安
仁兄鈞鑒　崇安
仁兄賜顧　勛安
仁兄侍右　禔安
仁兄清及　大安
仁兄台鑒　怡安
仁兄尊前　台安

Friendly.

仁兄如晤　道安
仁兄如握　時安
仁兄如面　近安
仁兄如見　近好

Friendly.

別來數〇甚念甚念
別來時深遠符心祝
久不把晤甚爲思念
不晤念甚

Affectionate.

分袂以來想望之殷
思念之心與時俱積
許久未晤企念殊深
久未通信時切懷思
"Too busy to write before."
自別之後雜事匆忙
自通信後連日雜事堆積過多

Asking for an answer.

請　速復
企候回音
乞賜回音
仰盼復音
叩候玉音

Phrases for Reply-Letters.

Complimentary.

昨蒙賜來　台札備領一切……專此敬復餘言不一即請……

今讀　尊書敬悉　尊意……　專此肅復敬請台安

前接　大札心思裁復……

敬誦　尊函知……

頃奉　手書領悉一切……

General.

頃接　來緘備知一一……　專此泐覆並請……

昨得　手書備知一是……　手此敬請……

接讀　手翰知……　此復即請……

展誦　手翰知……

For a letter which relieves one's suspense.

得　書甚慰知……

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